

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 221 734

CE 033 913

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TITLE Communications. Fire Service Certification Series. Unit FSCS-FF-16-81.
INSTITUTION Wisconsin State Board of Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education, Madison. Bureau of Program Development and Operations.
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 22p.; For related documents, see CE 033 897-915.
AVAILABLE FROM Wisconsin Board of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education, P.O. Box 7874, 4802 Sheboygan Avenue, 7th Fl., Madison, WI 53707 (Free to educational agencies).
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Alarm Systems; Behavioral Objectives; *Communication (Thought Transfer); *Communications; Course Descriptions; *Fire Fighters; *Fire Science Education; Learning Activities; Lesson Plans; Postsecondary Education; Teaching Guides; Units of Study
IDENTIFIERS Wisconsin

ABSTRACT

This training unit on communications is part of a 17-unit course package written to aid instructors in the development, teaching, and evaluation of fire fighters in the Wisconsin Fire Service Certification Series. The purpose stated for the 4-hour unit is to familiarize the fire fighter with the methods of communication in the fire service. An instructor's guide sheet provides this information: introduction to the topic, instructor preparation, length of unit, methods of instruction, testing, equipment and facilities required, recommended visual aids, and references. Following a list of unit objectives, a lesson plan outlines the main teaching points and states the preferred teaching method, cites the reference and page number(s) where the information is to be found, and indicates the necessary handouts. Other contents in the unit include a unit quiz, answer key to the quiz, and handouts (graphs, student worksheets, informational material, and forms). (YLB)

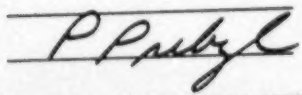
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4802 Sheboygan Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin 53702
Robert P. Sorensen, Ph.D., State Director

FIRE SERVICE CERTIFICATION SERIES
UNIT FSCS-FF-16-81
COMMUNICATIONS

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COMMUNICATIONS

Prepared by:

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INTRODUCTION

This unit discusses the methods of communication in the fire service. The degree to which the communication procedures are carried out have a bearing on the overall performance of the department and its varied activities. Efficient and effective communications result in efficient and effective fire ground operations and help in streamlining daily routines.

INSTRUCTOR PREPARATION

Carefully study the objectives to determine the goals that have been set for the firefighters upon completion of this unit.

Review the lesson plans and if necessary, consult the references listed.

Develop suitable audio-visual aids, provide training area and necessary tools and equipment to effectively teach this unit.

LENGTH OF UNIT

Classroom Work	3 hours 30 minutes
Evaluation and Testing	30 minutes

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

Lecture
Illustration/Demonstration

Suggested methods and techniques are listed under Instructor's Notes on the lesson plans. For further information consult Fire Service Instructor, IFSTA, 4th ed. pp. 69-77.

TESTING

At the end of this unit, a written quiz of five or more questions will be given.

EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES REQUIRED

Classroom with necessary audio-visual equipment
Telephone and radio trainers as available
Alarm system components as available

REFERENCES

Paige, J. ed., Essentials of Fire Fighting, #200, IFSTA, Stillwater 1st ed. 1977
pp. 323-331.

OBJECTIVES

All objectives in this unit are to be met according to the material contained in the International Fire Service Training Association Manual #200 Essentials of Fire Fighting.

To satisfactorily complete this unit, the firefighter must attain a grade of 70 or higher on the written quiz and successfully complete the practical skills examination where required.

NFPA STANDARD 1001

COMMUNICATIONS

FIRE FIGHTER I

3-14 COMMUNICATIONS

- 3-14.1 The firefighter shall demonstrate knowledge of the correct procedure for a citizen to report a fire, or other emergency.
- 3-14.2 The firefighter shall demonstrate correctly receiving an alarm or report of an emergency, and initiate proper action.
- 3-14.3 The firefighter shall describe the purpose and functioning of all alarm receiving instruments, and personnel alerting equipment provided in the fire station.
- 3-14.4 The firefighter shall demonstrate station watch duties as assigned by the authority having jurisdiction.
- 3-14.5 The firefighter shall demonstrate any traffic control devices installed in the fire station to facilitate the response of apparatus.
- 3-14.6 The firefighter shall demonstrate procedures required for receipt and processing of business and personal calls.
- 3-14.7 The firefighter shall demonstrate prescribed fire department radio procedures.
- 3-14.8 The firefighter shall demonstrate policy and procedures concerning the ordering and transmitting of multiple alarms of fires and calls for special assistance.
- 3-14.9 The firefighter shall identify and explain all fire alarm signals, including multiple alarm and special signals, governing the movements of fire apparatus, and the action to be taken upon the receipt of each signal.

OBJECTIVES

FIRE FIGHTER II

4-15 COMMUNICATIONS

- 4-15.1 The firefighter shall identify and demonstrate knowledge of areas assigned for first alarm response.
- 4-15.2 The firefighter shall demonstrate proper use as specified by the authority having jurisdiction, of radio equipment, both mobile and portable.
- 4-15.3 The firefighter shall demonstrate arrival and situation over fire department radios in the manner specified by the authority having jurisdiction.
- 4-15.4 The firefighter shall demonstrate any supervisory alarm equipment provided in the fire station and the prescribed action to be taken upon receipt of each signal.
- 4-15.5 The firefighter shall identify and explain fire location indicators provided to direct firefighters to specific locations in protected public or private properties.

FIRE FIGHTER III

5-10 COMMUNICATIONS

- 5-10.1 The firefighter shall demonstrate the rewinding, resetting or both, of any fire alarm boxes or devices on the public fire alarm system as specified by the authority having jurisdiction.
- 5-10.2 The firefighter shall demonstrate the ordering of multiple alarms and other calls for assistance from the fire ground when authorized to do so.
- 5-10.3 The firefighter shall identify the types of supervisory alarm systems in the area of the authority having jurisdiction.

COURSE: FIRE SERVICE CERTIFICATION SERIES

LESSON: FIRE ALARM COMMUNICATIONS

EQUIPMENT NEEDED: SLIDE, OVERHEAD OR MOVIE PROJECTOR, SCREEN

TRAINING AIDS: TRANSPARENCIES, SLIDES, FILMS, MODELS, TEXTS

INSTRUCTORS NOTES

TEACHING POINTS

Ref: Essentials of Fire
Fighting #200 IFSTA, 1st
ed. pp. 322-332

3-14 Communications

3-14.1
3-14.2

Ref: pp. 323-325 #200

FIRE ALARM COMMUNICATIONS

Communications include all the methods by which the public can notify the fire department communication center of an emergency and all the methods by which the center can notify the proper fire fighting forces and then relay information between those at the scene and the communications center.

It is hard to imagine operations of the past without sophisticated communications systems to speed response and guide activities.

METHODS OF RECEIVING ALARMS FROM THE PUBLIC

- . Wired Telegraph Circuit Box
- . Telephone Fire Alarm Box
- . Radio Fire Alarm Box
- . Commercial Telephone
- . Private System

WIRED TELEGRAPH CIRCUIT BOX

The first municipal alarm system, developed in 1847, was the telegraph type.

The modern system is operated by pressing a lever in the box which starts a spring wound clockwork mechanism.

The rotating mechanism transmits a code by opening and closing the circuit.

Each box transmits a different code to specify its location.

Wiring may be overhead or underground.

The system is limited in that no other information except location is transmitted, and malicious fire alarms were a problem.

INSTRUCTORS NOTES

TEACHING POINTS

Ref: Essentials of Fire
Fighting, #200, IFSTA,
1st ed. pp. 322-332

3-14 Communications

3-14.1
3-14.2

Ref: pp. 323-325 #200

TELEPHONE FIRE ALARM BOX

A telephone is installed in the box for direct voice contact allowing for exchange of more information on the type of response needed.

This system is generally leased from the telephone company and each box is connected to the communications center by a separate circuit of telephone company wire.

There are different types of the telephone box.

In one type when the handset is lifted from its cradle, a buzzer sounds and a light appears on the communication center's alarm display panel identifying the location of the box visually.

If the number of these boxes is unusually large causing an increased panel size, some departments have used the combination telegraph and telephone type circuits.

This would give the best of both systems where the basic pull-down hook is used to send the coded signal and a telephone is included for additional use.

Another type contains a telephone and no indication of box location.

A new system uses a city's telegraph cable with an open, easily-operated box which allows hands-free voice communications.

At the same time immediate identification of boxes through electronic display and print-out is provided.

All solid-state circuiting replaces electromechanical works.

RADIO FIRE ALARM BOX

A radio box contains an independent radio transmitter with battery power supply.

Solar recharging is available for some systems.

Others feature a spring wound alternator to provide power when the operating handle is pulled down.

There are different types of radio boxes.

Activating the alarm in some radio boxes alerts the fire department dispatcher by a noise signal or visual light indicator or both.

INSTRUCTORS NOTES

TEACHING POINTS

Ref: Essentials of Fire
Fighting, #200, IFSTA,
1st ed. pp. 322-332

3-14 Communications

3-14.1

3-14.2

Ref: pp. 323-325 #200

RADIO FIRE ALARM BOX

Some models have, besides a red alarm light indicator, a different light color indicator that signals a test or tamper signal.

By a time clock within the box, it can test itself every 24 hours.

If the box pole is struck or tampered with, the tamper light comes on and gives the box location.

Some boxes are numbered and this number also appears on the display panel, informing the dispatcher of the box involved and its location.

Some display equipment has a printing system which when activated by the incoming radio signal, prints the day of the year, time of day in 24 hour time, the message sent by the box, the box number, and a coded signal that indicates the strength of the battery within the box.

Some radio alarm boxes are so designed that a person can select their need of fire, police or ambulance service.

TELEPHONE

Voice communications allow more precise reporting of alarms and also reduce false alarms, although for many years telephones were not used to full advantage.

The public telephone system performs a very valuable function in reporting fires.

NFPA Standard 73 says that the alarm communication center should have at least one telephone line and in larger municipalities additional lines, depending on the traffic handled.

Because of its availability today, public telephones are the most common form of turning in a fire alarm.

"911" TELEPHONE SERVICE

Although the use of regular telephone lines to report fire alarms has helped considerably, some of the alarms have been delayed by confusion when several fire departments were in the same telephone service area.

Now telephone authorities supply one easily remembered number, "911", for emergencies when requested by local governments.

More and more cities are also using the number, but the system also has DISADVANTAGES.

INSTRUCTORS NOTES

TEACHING POINTS

Ref: Essentials of Fire
Fighting, #200, IFSTA,
1st ed. pp. 322-332

3-14 Communications
3-14.1
3-14.2

Ref: pp. 323-325 #200

3-14 Communications

3-14.3
3-14.4
3-14.5
3-14.6
3-14.7
3-14.8
3-14.9

Ref: pp. 326-329 #200

"911" TELEPHONE SERVICE

Police dispatchers commonly receive these calls, and delays in relaying the calls are still reported.

One advantage is that a single number can be dialed in the dark.

REPORTING A FIRE

Every fire department should include, in its public education program for fire safety, information on how and why to report a fire quickly and correctly.

Some departments print recommended message forms which help a caller to remember to state their name, callback number, the address of the fire, describe what is burning and sometimes tell the nearest intersection.

Some departments distribute their phone numbers on stickers for home and office phones, and place an address tag on every public phone booth.

The public should be told that even with sophisticated fire alarm equipment, a call from a private phone does not identify the location of a call unless the caller gives that information.

THE COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

The communication center houses the equipment and personnel to receive alarms and dispatch apparatus.

It may serve a single municipality or many.

According to NFPA Standards, a variety of equipment and methods may work well to meet the performance requirements below.

- . Automatic receipt and recording of box alarms.
- . Visual and audible indication of alarm as to location.
- . Automatic recording of time and location of alarm.

The communications center building should not be near high-risk fire hazards and no combustible materials should be permitted in its construction except floor covering laid directly upon noncombustible base.

INSTRUCTORS NOTES

TEACHING POINTS

Ref: Essentials of Fire
Fighting, #200, IFSTA,
1st ed. pp. 322-332

3-14 Communications

3-14.3
3-14.4
3-14.5
3-14.6
3-14.7
3-14.8
3-14.9

Ref: pp. 326-329 #200

Refer to Handout #1 & #2

THE COMMUNICATION CENTER

All lights should not be on a single branch line fuse.

Adequate emergency power is essential, including a reliable secondary source independent of other sources, which can supply its power to the line within 10 seconds.

For municipalities receiving more than 1500 alarms per year, NFPA Standards require at least two fully trained operators on duty at all times.

Actually, more are needed.

Even in smaller areas where only one operator is required, a major fire can occur to overload the abilities of a single operator.

The same possibility exists also in large municipalities with two operators.

From 10-20 or more emergency signals might be handled with just routine fire call in addition to the multiple phone calls.

One method of more efficiently handling the calls which may be received by any number of dispatchers is to use a communications recording and retrieval system.

Equipment is available to log both phone and radio transmissions protecting both citizens and the department by:

- . Providing an instant recheck of a hurriedly given name or location to allow the proper dispatch of personnel and equipment.
- . Providing a sequentially-timed record of call receipt, dispatch instructions, and apparatus response as proof, if necessary, of proper disposition of an emergency situation.
- . Providing, with one certain unit, a source for voice print analysis.

In addition, a station log should be maintained in which are recorded all calls received whether emergency or non-emergency, business, personal or radio communications.

INSTRUCTORS NOTES

TEACHING POINTS

Ref: Essentials of Fire
Fighting, #200, IFSTA,
1st ed. pp. 322-332

3-14 Communications

- 3-14.3
- 3-14.4
- 3-14.5
- 3-14.6
- 3-14.7
- 3-14.8
- 3-14.9

Ref: pp. 326-329 #200

4-15 Communications

- 4-15.1
- 4-15.2
- 4-15.3
- 4-15.4
- 4-15.5

RADIO OPERATIONS

Operators transmit voice-radio alarms at least twice to reduce the possibility of misunderstanding.

It is important also to those using the radio in the field to keep those transmissions both informative and as short as possible.

There should be a certain amount of instruction on the local level in the correct use of the radio.

This would include becoming familiar with the equipment and how it operates.

Correct voice procedures, which would include tone and speed of transmissions are needed.

Think over what you are going to say first so that it will be brief and understandable.

Department operating procedures which would include department codes, test procedures, and time limits on radio need to be established.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- . Avoid unnecessary transmissions. Be brief accurate and to the point.
- . Do not transmit until determining if the air is clear.
- . Any unit working at a fire or rescue has priority over any other transmission.
- . Do not use profane or obscene language on the air.
- . Hold the microphone 1" to 2" from the mouth. Do not shout. Pitch the voice high rather than low.
- . Speak calmly, clearly and distinctly in a natural conversational rhythm at medium speed.
- . Avoid laying the microphone on the seat of the vehicle where switch may be pressed to cause interference.
- . Follow the proper local department procedure, using code words where appropriate.
- . Do not touch the antenna when transmitting. Radio frequency burns may result.

INSTRUCTORS NOTES

TEACHING POINTS

Ref: Essentials of Fire
Fighting, #200, IFSTA,
1st ed. pp. 322-332

3-14 Communications

- 3-14.3
- 3-14.4
- 3-14.5
- 3-14.6
- 3-14.7
- 3-14.8
- 3-14.9

Ref: pp. 326-329 #200

4-15 Communications

- 4-15.1
- 4-15.2
- 4-15.3
- 4-15.4
- 4-15.5

RADIO OPERATIONS

All radio communications in the United States is under authorization from the Federal Communications Commission.

Over 7,000 fire departments and fire service organizations have been issued fire radio licenses from the FCC.

The actual number of departments is higher because some licenses to counties cover several individual departments using one communication center.

To keep the radio constantly ready for emergency transmissions, it is a federal offense to send personal or non-fire service messages.

Local department rules should specify who is authorized to transmit on the radio.

Whether codes or verbal descriptions are used, first arriving companies should use the radio to describe the scene.

This established time of arrival and allows others responding to determine what their next actions may be.

A typical arrival report might sound like this:

"Engine 25 to fire control. Light smoke showing from 3-story frame store and dwelling at 101 Balsam Avenue."

or

"Engine 15 to fire control. Heavy fire showing at 101 Balsam Avenue. Engine 14 laying two lines at the rear. Have engine 20 bring in two more lines to the front. This is a working fire."

Normally, only the ranking officer at the fire can order multiple alarms or additional response.

This may be varied by local conditions.

For example, when a single company sent to investigate an unknown fire discovers a working fire, the communication center might go ahead and start additional help, depending on the arrival report.

PRIVATE FIRE ALARM SIGNALING SYSTEMS

Besides the municipal alarm system, there are private protective signaling systems that assist the fire service. These systems can be used to:

INSTRUCTORS NOTES

TEACHING POINTS

Ref: Essentials of Fire
Fighting, #200, IFSTA,
1st ed. pp. 322-332

3-14 Communications

3-14.3
3-14.4
3-14.5
3-14.6
3-14.7
3-14.8
3-14.9

Ref: pp. 328-332 #200

4-15 Communications

4-15.1
4-15.2
4-15.3
4-15.4
4-15.5

PRIVATE FIRE ALARM SIGNALING SYSTEMS

- . Notify occupants to evacuate the premises.
- . Summon the fire department or other organized assistance.
- . Supervise extinguishing systems to insure their operability when needed.
- . Supervise industrial process to warn of abnormalities that may contribute to a fire hazard.
- . Supervise personnel to insure performance of assigned duties.
- . Actuate fire control equipment.

TYPES OF PRIVATE SIGNALING SYSTEMS ARE:

- . Central Station Protective Signaling Systems.
- . Local Protective Signaling Systems
- . Auxiliary Protective Signaling Systems.
- . Remote Station Protective Signaling Systems.
- . Proprietary Protective Signaling Systems.
- . Household Fire Warning Equipment.

CENTRAL STATION PROTECTIVE SIGNALING SYSTEMS

A central station system is a commercial fire alerting system or group of systems that signal the alarm to a central station.

This agency has trained and experienced personnel continually on duty to receive signals, retransmit fire alarms to the fire department, and take whatever action the supervisory signals indicate is necessary.

LOCAL PROTECTIVE SIGNALING SYSTEMS

An alarm or supervisory signal operates in the protected premises and is primarily for the notification of occupants and supervisory personnel.

The fire department should be notified every time a system is activated, even if the occupancy has a fire brigade and even if the fire is small.

INSTRUCTORS NOTES

TEACHING POINTS

Ref: Essentials of Fire
Fighting, #200, IFSTA,
1st ed. pp. 322-332

3-14 Communications

3-14.3
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3-14.9

Ref: pp. 328-332

4-15 Communications

4-15.1
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4-15.4
4-15.5

PRIVATE FIRE ALARM SIGNALING SYSTEMS

AUXILIARY PROTECTIVE SIGNALING SYSTEMS

The alarm goes directly to the municipal fire department.

The alarm devices are usually owned and maintained by the property owner, but the connecting facilities between the protected property and the fire department are apart of the municipal fire alarm system.

Areas protected are usually public buildings, such as schools and hospitals.

Visual indicators are provided at a location acceptable to the fire department to further direct firefighters to the precise location of the alarm.

This is especially necessary in a large complex of warehouses where at times no personnel are on duty to direct them.

Indicators connected to all the alarm devices must show:

- . Particular building of the complex.
- . Which floor of that building.
- . Which section of that floor.

REMOTE STATION PROTECTIVE SIGNALING SYSTEMS

Remote station protective signaling systems are installed to protect private premises.

Generally, these systems are installed and maintained by a commercial central station company.

However, instead of the alarm going to the commercial central station, it goes to a panel at a public fire alarm office where operators are available to act on the alarm.

PROPRIETARY PROTECTIVE SIGNALING SYSTEMS

These are systems protecting large plants and installations which maintain their own proprietary central station at and supervising the property protected.

From this supervising station alarm circuits automatically go directly to the fire department alarm office or fire station .

INSTRUCTORS NOTES

TEACHING POINTS

Ref: Essentials of Fire
Fighting, #200, IFSTA,
1st ed. pp. 322-332

3-14 Communications

3-14.3
3-14.4
3-14.5
3-14.6
3-14.7
3-14.8
3-14.9

Ref: pp. 328-332 #200

4-15 Communications

4-15.1
4-15.2
4-15.3
4-15.4
5-15.5

PRIVATE FIRE ALARM SIGNALING SYSTEMS

PROPRIETARY PROTECTIVE SIGNALING SYSTEMS

Personnel in the supervising station can call the department after investigation to give information about gate numbers, types of fire or building number.

HOUSEHOLD FIRE WARNING SYSTEMS

This is a system that produces an audible alarm in the household for the purpose of alerting the occupants of the presence of a fire so that they may evacuate the premises.

The provisions for these systems contemplate an installation having both heat and smoke detectors and alarm signals sufficiently loud to be heard in normally occupied parts of the household.

Many communities are requiring this type of home protection to be installed in new construction, and have inserted the necessary words into their building codes.

ALERTING VOLUNTEERS AND CALL PERSONNEL

Some departments alert members with outside sounding devices such as bells, chimes, whistles or sirens.

The firefighters have to respond to the station, or central point, or call on the telephone to get the location of the fire.

Sometimes these alerting systems give a coded signal to indicate the location of the fire.

SELECTIVE CALLING

A radio receiver or special telephone is installed in the firefighters home. This system is activated by a special preliminary signal.

Two of the methods for alerting those firefighters away from their homes are the mobile radio and pocket pager.

One remains silent until it receives the proper alerting tone from the base station, then it will activate and give the message.

The other type gives an alarm signal only.

UNIT QUIZ

There are five main methods of receiving alarms from the public. FILL IN THE BLANK WITH THE MOST APPROPRIATE TERM.

1. The first municipal alarm system, developed in 1847 and modernized for today's use is called the wired _____ box.
2. This system is limited in that no other information except _____ is transmitted.
3. A second method of receiving alarms, which allows for the exchange of more information about the type of response needed is called _____ fire alarm box.
4. A third method, which has either an independent battery supply or a solar recharger, is called the _____ fire alarm box.
5. Some models of this type have a tamper light and the ability to _____ themselves every 24 hours.
6. Some radio alarm boxes are designed so a person can transmit the need for fire, _____ or _____ service.
7. Because of its availability today, _____ is the common form of turning in a fire alarm.
8. Telephone authorities have supplied a special telephone service that allows all emergency service through one easily remembered number. This is _____ telephone service.

WISCONSIN FIRE SERVICE TRAINING
UNIT QUIZ
FIRE ALARM COMMUNICATIONS

CODE: FSCS-FF-16-81
16 of 19

Besides the municipal alarm system, there are private protection signaling systems that assist the fire service.

9. One of these is the central station protective signaling system. This is a _____ rather than a municipal fire alerting system.
10. Another system, the proprietary protective signaling system, is usually found protecting large _____.

Complete the following statements by matching them with the appropriate words listed on the right.

11. Operators transmit voice radio
alarms at least _____ to reduce
the possibility of misunderstanding.
12. It is important to keep transmissions informative
and as _____ as possible.
13. Do not transmit until determining the air
is _____.
14. Any unit _____
has priority over any other transmission.
15. Avoid laying the microphone on the _____
of the vehicle.
16. It is a _____ offense to send messages
unrelated to the fire service.
17. This action established _____ and allows
others responding to determine what their next actions might be.
18. Avoid _____ transmissions.
19. Do not use _____ language on the air.
20. Follow the proper local department procedures, using
_____ words where appropriate.
- a. Working at a fire or rescue
b. Natural
c. Unnecessary
d. Short
e. Code
f. Seat
g. burns
h. Clear
i. High, Low
j. Federal
k. Tone, Speed
l. Profane
m. Twice
n. 1 to 2
o. 2 to 5
p. Multiple
q. First
r. Time of Arrival

ANSWER KEY

1. telegraph circuit
2. location
3. telephone
4. radio
5. test
6. police, ambulance
7. public telephone
8. 911
9. commercial
10. plants or industry
11. m.
12. d
13. h.
14. a.
15. f.
16. j.
17. r.
18. c.
19. l.
20. e.

STATION RADIO LOG SHEET

FIRE STATION _____ CALL LETTERS _____ DATE _____ PAGE NO. _____

FROM

TO

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED OR TRANSMITTED

TIME

OPERATOR'S
SIGNATURE

